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Editorials

A Job for HUAC

Congress, at the request of President Kennedy, enthusiastically voted to restore to former President Eisenhower his five-star general rank, which he had resigned while in politics. Only one sour note of protest was sounded, the "no" vote of segregationist Congressman Dale Alford of Little Rock.

All Americans should applaud this congressional gesture of honor to a great patriotic leader. Unfortunately there are a few who do not. They are the members of a secret society which, under the guise of fighting communism, sponsors sneaky attacks on the reputation and character of many honorable public officials and private citizens. Their program is reminiscent of the worst stages of McCarthyism a decade ago.

Recently Senator Milton Young, North Dakota Republican, told the senate that members of the John Birch society in his state had accused him of communism, and that similar charges were being made against General Eisenhower. Time magazine, digging into the background of the Birch organization, found that its leader, Robert Welch of Massachusetts, had published a book in which both General Eisenhower and his brother, Milton, are attacked as members of the communist party. The former president is specifically accused of treason. John Foster Dulles is labeled a communist agent. His brother, CIA Director Allen Dulles, is called a supporter of communism. Impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren of the supreme court is demanded.

The Birch "Americanists," as they term themselves, claim cells in secret members in 33 states. They attack teachers and college professors and make anonymous telephone calls telling citizens that certain neighbors are suspected communists. Welch has denounced social security and the federal income tax as a communist plot to take over the

Such irresponsible divisive activities help the communist cause by setting Americans against Americans. They smack of the methods of a dictator. Welch describes democracy as a "racial fraud," yet sets himself up as a patriotic to sit in judgment on the Americanism of those who do not share his ideas. He has duped some reputable citizens into following his lead by convincing them they are engaged in fighting communism.

Such activities as those of the Birch group should be brought into the open where the public can examine them. This would seem to be an excellent opportunity for the House Un-American Activities Committee to conduct a searching investigation of a thoroughly un-American program.